Josh Brunner

The name of my instrument is “Christmas Tin Can Drums”. I got the idea from simply tapping different things to make sound and also from this site: http://www.philtulga.com/. It’s a percussion instrument and looks like a bunch of cans turned upside down with silly Christmas decorations attached to it. Most of the notes have a higher pitch, but two are lower. The volume is based on how hard you hit the drums. Each tin can vibrates at its own frequency. Some of the cans have better resonance with the Kinex piece that I use to play the drums with and ring longer and louder. The sound waves travel from inside each can to the top of the each can. This is how the acoustics of the instrument work. The tone is good on it and the notes are close to pitch (according to my band). My band’s name is the Blueberry Muffins. I did not really care what name we used, so Jessica decided on it. The name of my concert hall is Sensational Sounds Concert Hall. The name comes from the idea that the place is designed for sound to travel very well throughout the concert hall.

My materials are different sized cans, wire, tape, and Kinex pieces. I got the cans from the recycling bin. My mom has wire and tape that she keeps at home, and I have Kinex. Each can (except for one pair) was a different size. I used my 19cm long Kinex pieces as drumsticks and 13cm long Kinex pieces as supports. The wire is a thin green wire used to tie things like flower arrangements together, and the tape was electrical tape.

To make my instrument, I first turned all of the cans upside down. Next, my mom and I worked together to tie the cans together with wire. After that, we taped them together with a ring of tape around the outside and attached little Christmas balls to the tape. Finally, we taped the smaller Kinex pieces to the cans for supports. The main problem I had with making my instrument was keeping all of the cans together without affecting their sound. At first, I was simply tying them together, but I realized to keep them secure, I needed tape. The tape solved that problem.

To play my instrument, you simply hit the center of each can with the end of the stick. To change the volume, simply change how hard you hit the drums. The pitch is based on which can you hit. There is no way to tune the instrument. When you hit a can, the can vibrates, creating sound. The sound waves travel directly away from the instrument and from inside the can out the top of the can.

The project was kind of fun, getting to experiment with and hit different objects to make sound. I did feel like it was a little difficult though, and it felt even harder to me since I know very little about music because I don’t listen to it. I learned that even if two objects appear to be identical, they can have their own unique sound. I also learned that it makes a huge difference what surface the object is on and what it is hit with. I figured out that it creates better sound when elevated rather than touching any surface. I would have liked for the cans to be more secure and easier to carry. Also, I wish that the cans had a more musical sound to them.